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General debate

Letter dated 1 October 1999 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

The statement of Mr. Mate Granic, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Croatia, in the general debate of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations on 25 September 1999 is a reflection of the duplicity of the policy of the Republic of Croatia towards the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia: a vocal advocate of good-neighbourliness, the Republic of Croatia uses every opportunity to denigrate the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in international forums in an attempt to disguise the true cause of the crisis in the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and to conceal its own responsibility.

1. Oblivious to the secessionism of the former Yugoslav Republics, the Foreign Minister of Croatia trots out the stale accusations that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has been the epicentre of the crisis in south-east Europe in the last decade and that the crisis has now escalated to Kosovo and Metohija, the autonomous province of the Yugoslav constituent Republic of Serbia. In raising these accusations, the Foreign Minister of Croatia treats the Serbian province as a separate entity.

2. The Foreign Minister of Croatia falsely accuses the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia of aggression and territorial ambitions towards the Republic of Croatia, even though it is widely known in the international community that the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was ravaged by civil war, caused by the secessionism of some of its Republics, Croatia in particular.

3. The territorial dispute between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Croatia over the Prevlaka peninsula on which bilateral negotiations are under way is being misused in order to interfere in the internal affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The opening of a "border crossing" at one point of the international border of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, termed tendentiously as a border crossing towards Montenegro, is seen as a key contribution of Croatia to the democratic transformation of that Yugoslav Republic. The position of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on the disputed territorial

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issue of Prevlaka is clear and has been repeatedly stated in official meetings of state delegations of the two countries.

Of particular concern are the indications of the Foreign Minister of Croatia that his country is prepared to change the regime in the region of Prevlaka by unilateral actions. In that context, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia wishes to recall that the Agreement on Normalization of Relations between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Croatia provides for the validity of that regime pending the solution of the disputed issue of Prevlaka. A threat to violate an international obligation unilaterally, including by a military action, is legally untenable and constitutes an open danger fraught with unforeseeable consequences for the relations between the two countries and for peace and security in the region. Such a threat deserves appropriate attention by the Security Council and the United Nations.

4. By confusing the issues and levelling unfounded accusations at others, the Foreign Minister of Croatia embarks upon an elaborate undertaking of concealing the ethnic cleansing of the Serbs from Croatia carried out by his country despite international outrage and censure. That ruse is only too apparent: United Nations Member States are well aware of the assessments of the situation of human rights in Croatia made by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe. At the meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna on 3 June 1999 and in the quarterly report of the OSCE mission in Croatia of 18 May 1999, Croatia is censured for failure to carry out its international commitments, in particular vis-à-vis the return of Serbia expellees, amnesty, cooperation with the Hague Tribunal, freedom of the media and the electoral process. The lack of political will on the part of the Government of Croatia to return property to Serbian expellees, to revoke discriminatory laws and to provide material resources for reconstruction has been blamed as a root cause of stagnation in this field.

Resuscitating the old pronouncements about "occupied territories" in Eastern Slavonia, the Foreign Minister of Croatia seeks to justify the ethnic cleansing of the Serbs, in particular Croatian military operations "Flash" and "Storm", launched to achieve that goal, and the flouting of the obligation to ensure the return of the Serbs. Examples of this policy are many and the town of Kistanje may be one of the most conspicuous: prior to August 1999 in was inhabited by Serbs; today no Serb lives in it.

The Foreign Minister of Croatia puts a rosy veneer on Croatia's policy vis-à-vis the return of Serbian expellees and provides a grossly inflated number of Serbs who, he alleges, have returned: the number of 65,000 from Mr. Granic's statement is in sharp contrast to the UNHCR account of only 4,120 Serbs who have in fact returned. Croatia's foot-dragging on the issue is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that, of 24,000 applications submitted by the Serbs from Croatia who have found shelter in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and who are desirous to return to Croatia, Croatia has processed 17,000 requests, granting a positive reply to only 7,000.

Discrimination against the Serbs is evident also in the ongoing amendments of the electoral law on the eve of the forthcoming parliamentary elections. If the bill is to be adopted, the Serbs will have only one member in the Croatian Parliament as against the present 3 or 13 members in the previous Parliament. The political marginalization of the Serbs is calculated to eliminate Serbian representatives from the highest institutions of Croatian government. To add insult to injury, the Foreign Minister of Croatia calls this policy a joint success of Croatia and the United Nations, mocking thus the authority and reputation of the United Nations.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 9.

(*Signed*) Vladislav **Jovanovic**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Fifty-fourth session
Agenda items 121 and 126
Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001
United Nations common system

Administrative and financial implications of the decisions and recommendations contained in the report of the International Civil Service Commission (A/54/30)*

Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly

Summary

Pursuant to rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the present statement is submitted detailing the administrative and financial implications of the decisions and recommendations of the International Civil Service Commission on the common system, in particular their implications on the proposed programme budget of the United Nations for the biennium 2000-2001.

* An advance copy of the report of the International Civil Service Commission (A/54/30) was used in the preparation of the present statement.

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I. Introduction

1. The twenty-fifth annual report of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC)[1] will contain decisions and recommendations with financial implications for the regular budget for the biennium 2000-2001 related to the following issues (the numbers in parentheses refer to paragraphs in the advance copy of the ICSC report):

(a) Conditions of service of staff in the Professional and higher categories: base/floor salary scale and staff assessment scale (paras. 78 and 79);

(b) Conditions of service applicable to the General Service and related categories: survey of best prevailing conditions of employment for the General Service and related categories in Paris (para. 118).

II. Conditions of service of staff in the Professional and higher categories

A. Base/floor salary scale

2. The General Assembly, in section I.H of its resolution 44/198 of 21 December 1989, established a floor net salary level for staff in the Professional and higher categories by reference to the corresponding base net salary levels of officials in comparable positions serving in the base city of the comparator civil service (the federal civil service of the United States of America). The base/floor scale was part of an integrated package of measures in which negative classes of post adjustment were eliminated. The base/floor scale is used in the calculation of payments under the mobility and hardship scheme as well as separation payments.[2] Adjustments to this scale have been made, since 1990, on 1 March of every year from 1991 to 1995 and in 1998 and 1999, and on 1 January 1997.

3. The General Schedule salary scale for the United States federal civil service in Washington, D.C., the current comparator, was increased by 3.68 per cent on a gross basis effective 1 January 1999. This amount resulted in a net increase of 3.42 per cent for the comparator officials at the GS-13/GS-14 levels, the reference point for comparisons between the General Schedule and the common system base/floor scale. In accordance with the approved procedures and past practice, this would call for an upward adjustment of the common system salary scale by 3.42 per cent. Therefore, the Commission, in its 1999 annual report, decided to recommend to the General Assembly an upward adjustment by 3.42 per cent of the common system scale, which should be implemented with effect from 1 March 2000. The increase of 3.42 per cent in the base/floor scale for 2000 would be implemented through the standard method of consolidating post adjustment multiplier points on a no-loss/no-gain basis.

4. The financial implication for the United Nations common system as a whole as a result of the above-mentioned adjustment of the base/floor scale has been calculated by ICSC as follows:

(a) For duty stations that would fall below the level of the new base/floor: $362,813;

(b) In respect of the mobility/hardship allowance: $2,260,227;

(c) In respect of the scale of separation payments: $513,820.

5. The total annual financial implication for the United Nations common system has been estimated at $3,136,860.

6. The annual financial implication for the United Nations regular budget has been estimated at $941,100.

7. If the base/floor salary scale is adjusted on 1 March 2000, the financial implication for the United Nations regular budget for a 22-month period (1 March 2000 to 31 December 2001) is estimated at $1,725,300.

B. Simplified procedure for revising the staff assessment at the single rate

8. In the process of consolidating post adjustment points into the base/floor scale, the Commission decided to adopt a simplified process to determine the revised net base salaries for staff receiving remuneration at the single rate.

9. The staff assessment scale used in conjunction with the base/floor salary scale would be simplified. Losses and gains in salaries for those receiving remuneration at the single rate would be eliminated.

10. The Commission estimated that, using the revised procedure, the staff assessment generated from the salaries of staff at the Professional and higher categories in all organizations would be $354.87 million per annum, an increase of less than 0.08 per cent over the $354.58 million estimated under the current procedure. Accordingly, the financial implications for the United Nations regular budget would be negligible and would be offset by an equivalent amount under income section 1, Staff assessment, of the regular budget.

III. Conditions of service of staff in the General Service category and other locally recruited staff

11. ICSC reviewed the methodologies for the surveys of best prevailing conditions of employment at headquarters and non-headquarters duty stations. In its resolution 52/216 of 22 December 1997, the General Assembly endorsed the Commission's recommendations for refinements and modifications to the methodologies.

12. On the basis of the revised methodology, the Commission conducted a survey of best prevailing conditions of service for the General Service and other locally recruited categories of staff in Paris, with a reference date of April 1999. The results of that survey indicated that salaries in the outside market were on average 6.5 per cent lower than those of the United Nations common system staff. However, the Commission also noted that there had been considerable changes in the French taxation system that affected the purchasing power of French civil servants. The Government of France had implemented special measures to make up for the loss of purchasing power of its civil servants. Therefore, the Commission also considered it appropriate to take exceptional measures to address the adverse impact of the above-mentioned changes on the salaries of United Nations staff serving in Paris. The Commission recommended that, following the implementation of the revised salary scale, a one percentage point reduction be made from future interim adjustments so as to ensure the elimination of the exceptional measures, which comprise a 5 per cent adjustment, before the next salary survey in Paris.

13. The proposed salary scale for United Nations system staff serving in Paris is therefore 1.44 per cent lower than the current scale. Without the adjustment to phase in the effects of changes in the French taxation system, the salary scale resulting from the survey would have been approximately 6.5 per cent lower than the current scale. The financial implication of the Commission's decision regarding the phased elimination of the impact of changes in the taxation system was estimated at $1.7 million per annum. With the complete phasing out of the ad hoc measures, the saving would increase to approximately $2.2 million per annum. Therefore, it is expected that minor savings would accrue in the regular budget of the United Nations for the biennium 2000-2001.

IV. Summary

14. The financial implications for the regular budget of the United Nations for the 22-month period from 1 March 2000 to 31 December 2001 arising from the decisions and recommendations of ICSC to the General Assembly are summarized below (in United States dollars).

Remuneration of the Professional and higher categories of staff	
For duty stations that fall below the level of the new base/floor	$199 600
Mobility/hardship scheme	$1 243 100
Separation payments	$282 600
Total	**$1 725 300**

15. Accordingly, the increased requirements under the regular budget resulting from the recommendations and decisions of ICSC have been estimated to be on the order of $1,725,300, net of staff assessment. The additional requirements for the regular budget in the biennium 2000-2001 will be reflected in the recosting of the programme budget proposals prior to determination of the appropriation to be adopted by the General Assembly.

Notes

[1] To be issued as *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 30* (A/54/30).

[2] Ibid., *Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 30* (A/44/30), vol. II, paras. 118, 119, 316 and 453 (g).